

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Re'eh	31 Aug. 2019	30 Av 5779	Deut. 11:26-16:17	Isa. 66:1-24	Mark 9:40-50

We continue with third week of consolation as we get closer to Rosh Hashanah (Festival of Trumpets). Before we begin to study this week's Torah portion Re'eh ("Behold"), we will study deeper meaning of Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) and how it applies to our daily life.

Every Rosh Chodesh contains dual aspects: the general concept of Rosh Chodesh and an element unique to the Rosh Chodesh of a particular month. Every person is created "in the image of Hashem." At the same time, every one of us are not alike, as our sages said "The Supreme King of Kings stamped each person with the seal of Adam, and no two are like, differing in voice, appearance, and understanding."

The "Rosh" means "head," indicating that the head encompass the whole body and directs it. So is the general concept of Rosh Chodesh. A unique element of Rosh Chodesh Elul is that Hashem called Moshe to come up the mountain to receive the second set of tablets. We learned that Moshe went up Mount Sinai at least three times, each visit lasting forty days according to the Scripture.

The first forty-days were in favor from Hashem as well as the third ascent. Moshe's second ascent was when Hashem was angered over the sin of the Golden Calf. In one aspect, the third ascent was loftier than the first ascent when Moshe went up Mount Sinai to receive the second tablets. The first ascent was completely righteous. The second ascent was the service of *teshvah* (repentance) of the sin of the Golden Calf. And the third ascent was loftier than the second ascent because in the place of penitents stand where not even the completely righteous can stand.

The Tur<sup>1</sup> explains that Moshe ascended to receive the second set of tablets on Rosh Chodesh Elul and the Children of Yisrael blew shofar in the camp. Therefore, the sages ordained that we should blow shofar the entire month of Elul to warn the Yisraelites to repent.

Chassidus explains that the blowing of the shofar effect "*ta'anug*" (תַּעֲנוּג, delight), an extremely lofty level. Thus, this fear is not the fear (afraid) that the enemy is attacking, but it is as in delight present in awe of and fear before Hashem. It is the service of *teshuvah* with *ta'anug*.

How does that apply to us? In the month of Elul, Hashem is as a "king in the field when all are permitted and are able to receive him. And he receives them all benignly and graciously." So, on Elul, we go to greet Hashem in the field as the service of Elul is the proper preparation for Tishrei's service; when after receiving the King in the field, the people follow the King to His capital city, to His royal palace.

The Alter Rebbe explains that the 13 attributes of mercy illuminate in the month of Elul. But, since it is compared to the king in the field and not in the royal palace, the days of Elul are weekdays and not Yom Tov. Even when we are in the field, meaning "the worldly matters" on week days, Hashem nevertheless receive us graciously. So, we are to go to the "field", knowing that Hashem is in the "field" to greet Him knowing that we will be received by Him graciously and warmly.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Jacob Ben Asher (1269-1340 CE)

The Tanya<sup>2</sup> explains that the purpose of creation of all worlds is not for the sake of the upper (spiritual) level, but rather for the sake of this lowly physical world as Hashem desires to have a dwelling place in the lowest of all worlds. It is true the revelation of G-dliness is greater in the upper worlds. However, this revelation is a lowering of the Divine Light. So, the ultimate purpose is to have a dwelling place in this lowest of all worlds, a dwelling place for Hashem's essence, not just revelation. Thus, the essence of Hashem is in the "field", for the making of a dwelling place for Hashem in this physical world.

We have two Rosh Chodesh, one on August 31<sup>st</sup> and the other on September 1<sup>st</sup>. That is because the cycle of the first moon appears on August 31<sup>st</sup>. As Moshe ascended the mountain on the first of Elul, we begin to blow shofar on the second day of Rosh Chodesh. Nevertheless, on the first day of Rosh Chodesh we practice blowing. The sages say that the practice blowing of shofar which is one long blow known as "*tekiyah gedolah*", lit. (the great sounding) is as akin to the future redemption of Messiah that symbolize "freedom".

In chapter 14 of Devarim, the Torah discusses the pure animals that are permitted for consumption and the impure ones that are forbidden. The Torah offers two signs for the permitted animals: they chew the cud and have split hoofs. Now, the signs given by the Torah divide into two categories: casual signs – the signs, chewing the cud and split hoofs causes it to be classified as a pure animal; and descriptive sign – to recognize which is a pure animal. This helps us to recognize and identify such animals.

The concept of eating whether it is an animal, vegetable, or mineral, by eating these, the food becomes part of the person. It is converted into blood and flesh of the body. It is absorbed in the human level to achieve its ultimate purpose. The Gemara<sup>3</sup> and the Midrash<sup>4</sup> explains that a human body is comparable to the aspects of minerals, vegetables and animals. Then there are aspects which distinguish the human from minerals, vegetables and animals, thus marking him as a human being.

By eating permitted food, we are elevating its "soul" to a higher level. For example, the minerals are absorbed by the plants which is eaten by the animals. The animals (permitted) then are consumed by human. Each elevation fulfills its ultimate purpose that it was created. When we consume minerals, vegetables and permitted animals, and perform *mitzvah* (deeds) for the sake of Hashem, then we are fulfilling our ultimate purpose. This is an example of casual signs. As we are performing *mitzvah*, the minerals, vegetables and animals that we consumed also gets elevated as it fulfills its purpose. This is an example of descriptive signs.

The true nature of *adam* (the human) is his potential of "אֶדָם מֵהָאֵלֹהִים לְעֵלְיוֹן" (*ed-dam-meh, le-el-yon*) "I will be like the Most High," (Isa. 14:14) as it were to bring the Supernal "Adam on the Throne." (Ezek. 1:26) which is the ultimate essence of *adam*. The man below is referred to as *adam* because of his potential of "I will be like the Adam Above." Man is unique in that he is absorbed in the Supernal Adam by carrying out the mission of the "Supernal Adam." Likkutei Torah<sup>5</sup> explains that when carrying out the mission of the "Supernal Adam" one becomes like Him. This is the concept of absorption, of being absorbed in the Supernal Adam.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 36

<sup>3</sup> Chagigah 16a

<sup>4</sup> Beresheet Rabbah 8:11

<sup>5</sup> Likkutei Torah, Vayikra, p. 2b

<sup>6</sup> Likkutei Sichot, Re'ey, p. 40-41